DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 420 UD 029 342

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TITLE Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and Their Children in the Other America.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-226-67183-6
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 228p.
AVAILABLE FROM University of Chicago Press, Book Orders, 5801 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637-1496 ($22.50).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS At Risk Persons; *Children; Day Care; Disadvantaged Youth; *Economically Disadvantaged; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; *Family Problems; Feminization of Poverty; Health Services; Housing; *Mothers; *One Parent Family; Poverty; Social Problems; Urban Problems; Welfare Services

ABSTRACT

The lives of poor single mothers and their children are explored, first grounding the present situation historically and pointing out their "other" status when examined against normal motherhood and family images. The first two chapters discuss the historical images of childhood and the family as they have developed in Western civilization. Part 2 introduces motherhood as experienced by single mothers and their children. The feminization of poverty is recognized through the stories single mothers tell. Part 3 examines the lives of the children as they enter school and the larger world. Single mothers and their children are a growing constituency in the United States. Other Western democracies have succeeded in alleviating the effects of poverty and offer workable models of much that might be done in this country. Recommendations for the future include: (1) universal health care; (2) affordable housing; (3) child allowances and maternity and parental leave; (4) a national child-care system; and (5) a pedagogy of equity. (SLD)

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